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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8395
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RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 5654
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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 3907
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RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 4200
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 4187
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 5731
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SUBJECT: BOLIVIA: EVO'S IRANIAN VISIT

Cooperation and Defense of Iran's Nuclear Program

¶1. Bolivian President Evo Morales finished an official two-day visit to Libya and Iran by issuing a joint statement with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declaring that the "interference of the United Nations Security Council (in Iran's nuclear program) has no legal or technical justification." The joint statement highlights the "peaceful nature" of Iran's nuclear activities, adding that Bolivia and Iran will continue their struggle against imperialism. Ahmadinejad used the occasion of Morales' visit to Tehran to announce that Iran and Bolivia will "stick by each other's side...The geographical distance between the two countries is long but our hearts, thoughts and wills are very close." Ahmadinejad congratulated Morales for "standing up to foreigners" and commented that "it is not important what bad-tempted governments say about our relationship." The two presidents also signed a joint statement calling for an expansion in cooperation on energy, industry, and trade between the two nations.

Confronting "Hegemony"

¶2. According to media reports, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told Morales on September 1 that "The awakening of the Latin American nations and their will to fulfill their rights is an auspicious event which will definitely make the big powers unhappy." Urging Morales to oppose U.S. policies, Khamenei was quoted on Iranian television as saying, "Hegemonic powers will obviously pressure you because they are opposed to such spirit, but resistance against these pressures and reliance on God will lead to victory." Morales responded, "Struggles and popular uprising in Latin American nations against America's

imperialism is inevitable. Latin America will never be America's safe backyard to plunder and pursue its wicked ideas."

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Military Cooperation
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¶3. The Bolivian national news service (ABI) reports that in a visit with the Iranian Defense Minister, Morales received a promise of support from Iran to modernize the Bolivian Armed Forces. According to ABI, "Iranian defense officials explained that they are armed to defend themselves, not to be aggressive toward anyone, and for that reason production of weaponry is important."

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Further Comments from Morales
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¶4. In an interview with Iranian television, Morales said that Iraq and Afghanistan have become a "second Vietnam" for the United States. Morales later commented that Iranians and Bolivians "will like to see how their leaders fight imperialism and defend the interests of their countries....In the past, Bolivia was not allowed to change its ministers or ambassadors. It had to be done through the U.S. ambassador. But today, freedom-seeking in Latin American nations is spreading." Morales declared, "In this visit to Tehran we

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will encourage even more these (bilateral) relations...Nothing and no country will impede our relations with the revolutionary nation of Iran...I will never regret having come."
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